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Clark, Lewis G.

A Remedy for a
Great Evil;...

Detroit, 1890

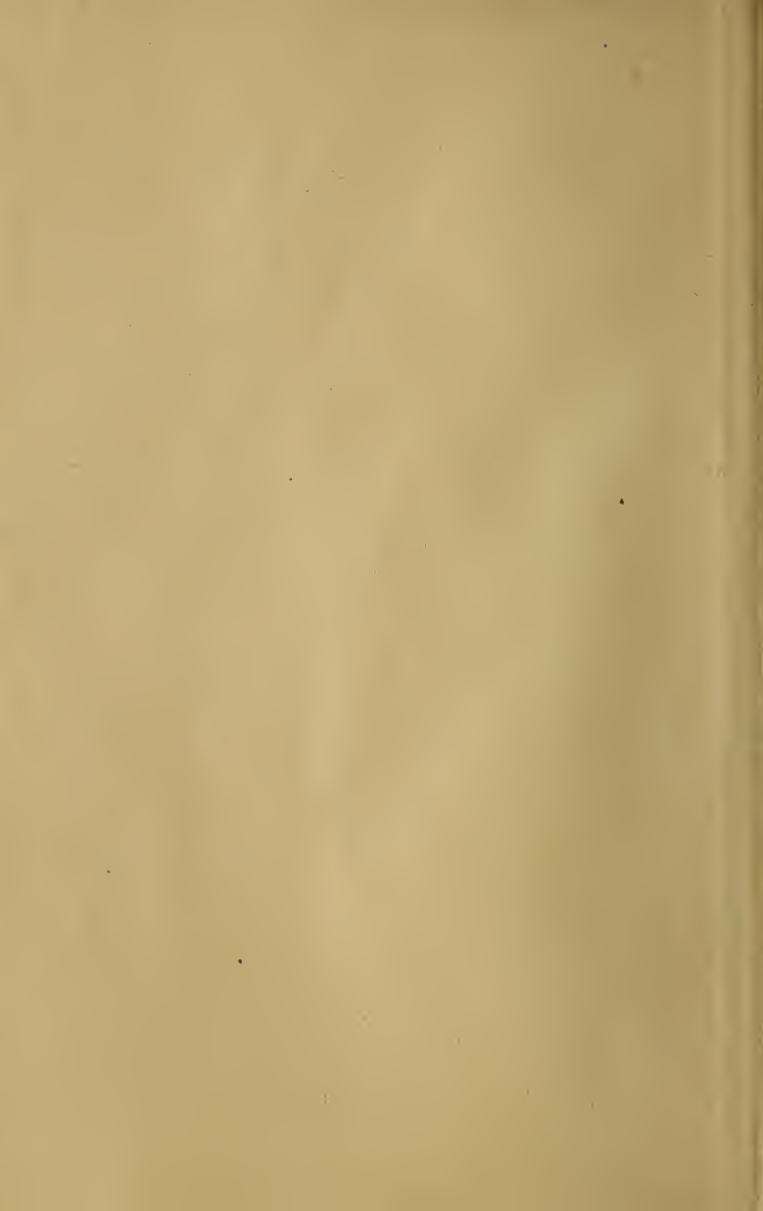


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A REMEDY

FOR

A GREAT EVIL;

OR,

HOW SHALL WE VOTE?

BY

LEWIS G. CLARK,

THE "GEORGE HARRIS" OF "UNCLE TOM'S CABIN."

DETROIT, MICH.:

FERGUSON PRINTING COMPANY.

1890.

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LEWIS G. CLARK.
THE "GEORGE HARRIS" OF "UNCLE TOM'S CABIN."

INTRODUCTION.

WHILE everything else connected with human affairs seems to be approaching perfection, the very system and foundation of just government is let stand at loose ends. I refer to the ballot.

So much depends upon the casting of a vote; and yet thousands look upon it with profound indifference, while even more than this scarcely give it a thought beyond what trifle it will bring.

Think of the large number of drift-wood people who value their vote at any price from a glass of whiskey to a suit of clothes! The ballot in the hands of such people becomes a most unreliable thing, oftener giving strength to wrong than power to right, thus defeating its own object. There are others whose aims are higher, but who are guided solely by pure selfishness. Their employes must vote as they direct or suffer the consequences.

Then, too, all the votes cast in their section of country must be in support of certain principles. If they were not so intended they must be so counted.

Men of wealth and power run this great machine, leaving justice altogether out of the question, and indeed I am of the opinion that the majority of votes polled in America are influenced by oppression direct or indirect.

I can see but one way to cure these political diseases, and that is for the Government to adopt a *good* system, one sure to bring the desired results, and then rigidly carry it out and save our great country from ruin and oppression.

It cannot be denied that the South needs regulation in this matter. There the free ballot is a mere mockery.

I have faith to believe that the system I have reasoned out will accomplish just what is needed. Yours truly,

LEWIS G. CLARK,
The "George Harris" of "Uncle Tom's Cabin."

A REMEDY FOR
A GREAT EVIL
OR
HOW SHALL WE VOTE?

I HAVE seen and heard so many complaints on account of unlawful voting and tested elections, and as I am deeply interested in the matter, I have studied a plan that if carried out would be a complete remedy for the whole matter. I would have each state pass a registration law and have all legal

voters meet at the accustomed place of voting, and have their names registered, and the registration board should be composed of one competent man from each national party then in existence, and there should be at least six days' time given to complete the work of registration, and any one that did not register his name during that week should not be allowed to vote. Also I would have an envelope prepared by the state for each registered voter that should be so constructed that it would be difficult to imitate or counterfeit. Perhaps the envelope might be printed after the fashion of a bank bill, and have special private marks on it, so a detective could detect any counterfeit one, if such a one should be used in any way. These should be sent to each postmaster in the vicinity where the voting is done. Let it be his duty to deliver to each registered voter one envelope by his presenting to him a certificate that was given him by

the registration board, it having been signed by each member of the registration board, and each postmaster should have the person receiving his envelope to sign on the back of his certificate, his name and residence before a witness, or make his mark, as is done by those that cannot write, according to law in other cases. And it shall be the duty of the postmaster to return all of the envelopes that are not called for to vote with. Any persons that have been registered as legal voters, and each person that did not call for their envelope, or did get it and did not use it, and is still alive, shall be subject to a fine not less than \$10 and not more than \$25 for such neglect of duty, after the state has gone to the expense to prepare and arrange protection for him to vote peaceably. For the voter may inclose any one's name in his envelope that he may think best, and seal it and drop it in the ballot box himself, after the board may

find his name on the registered list. He need not hand his envelope to any one, but shall put it in the box with his own hand, so no one can have the chance to mark it with either indigo or lamp-black under his thumb or finger nail so as to know how he voted. This is for protection to the dependent voter. All halls or houses where voting is done should have two doors, and as soon as a man has voted he should go out the opposite door; there being a wire or ropes stretched across from door to door, or if there was only one door the wires should be so arranged as to turn and let them pass out the same door they came in. And there should not be any one allowed to stay in the room during the time of voting or counting, except the officers. For there will be no need of the insulting way of challenging the voter as to his right to vote. If any one should put more than one vote, or more than is right to be put in his envelope, they will

not be counted for him. After each election is over all returns should be made to the Secretary of State, with all the registration lists and all of the envelopes that had not been used, together with all that had not been called for, and all of the names of those that had been registered and did not call for their envelope. This is necessary in order to prevent men from being hired to stay away from the polls. It should be the privilege and duty of every lover of our government to help carry out this plan of voting, so as to protect life and liberty and make our country just what it should be, a free and sovereign government where each man can vote as he thinks and no one know how he did vote; so as to discharge him, or close a mortgage on him, or else an account on him, or have his friend do it. There are many ways to punish voters that have never been brought to light yet. For there are many men that seem to be liberal

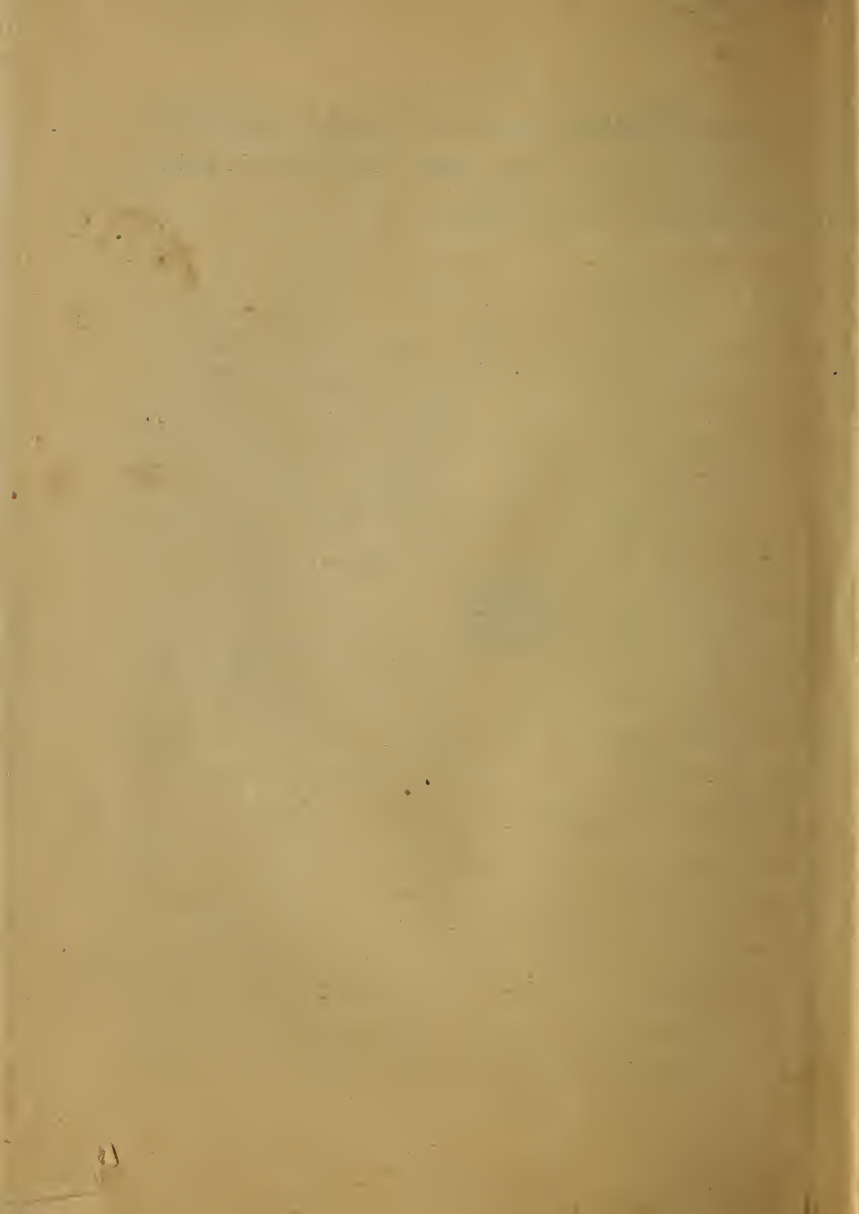
as a general thing on money matters, and when it comes to their politics they are unreasonable tyrants and oppressive, and will lie without guide or gauge. And here let me say I have often thought that the vulgar artist has a very low opinion of the refined taste of the American people, when he engraves so many hideous caricatures, as representing the formation and figure of the several candidates for the Presidency of the United States, and many put them in their windows for sale. Now I have always looked on these things as being very degrading to the mind, especially the young. It has nearly the same effect that it has on the young to see a man staggering and falling drunk. Such cannot help but lower the mind of the young in relation to the respect that they should have for men. All such is degrading to all of us to a certain degree and cannot be otherwise. As to slanderous and vulgar reports against men of opposite politi-

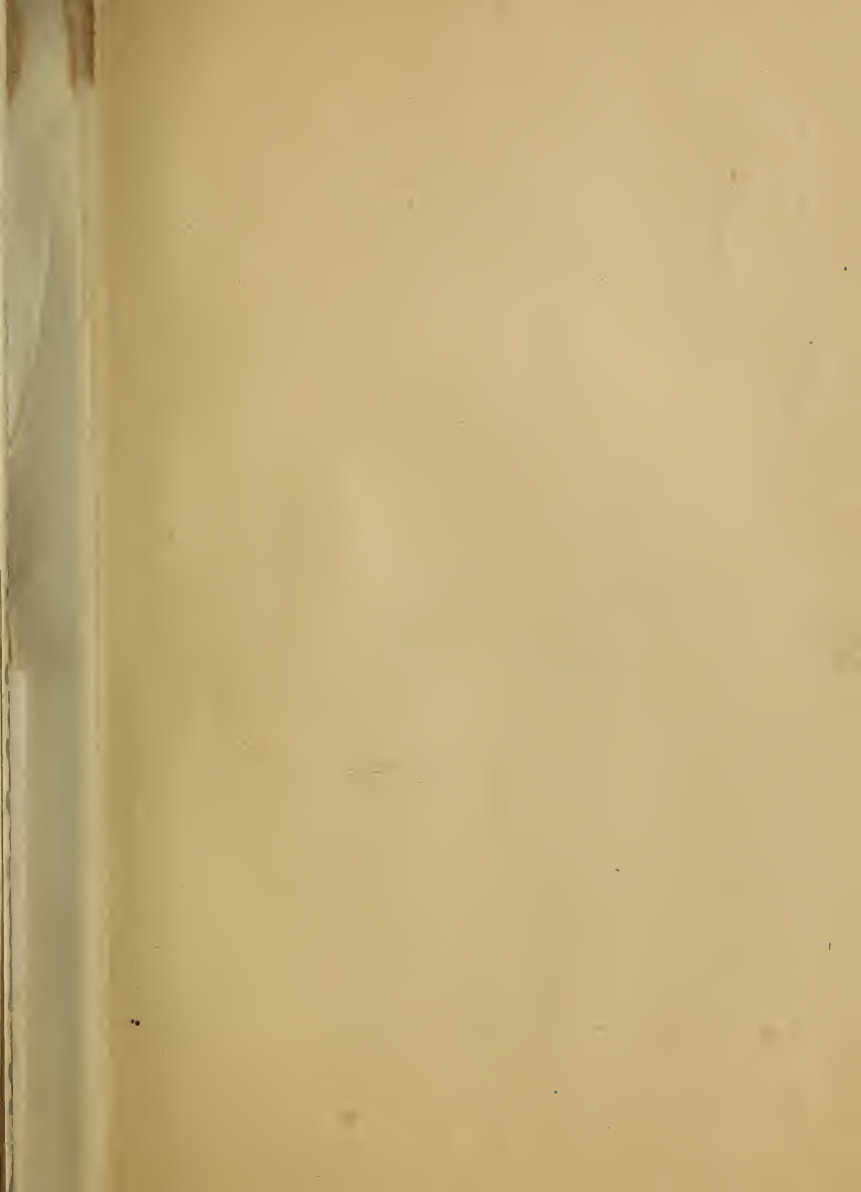
cal parties, there is no end to it and there should be a stop put to it, and I am sure it could be done by punishing those that dare to do it, just as those who are guilty of any other slanderous reports against private individuals. And in order to meet the case, when persons are nominated for any office in town, city, county, borough, district, territory or Nation to be voted for, and any person knowing of any reason why such a person should not be voted for on account of their disreputable character, such person should be required to enter complaint against such nominee within ten days after the candidate was nominated, or forever hold his peace in relation to the matter. And if a complaint is made against a candidate, the same should be tried before a jury of twelve men, they being taken or selected from each party, as well as having three judges, one from each large party, as now in politics. And if the accused should be proven

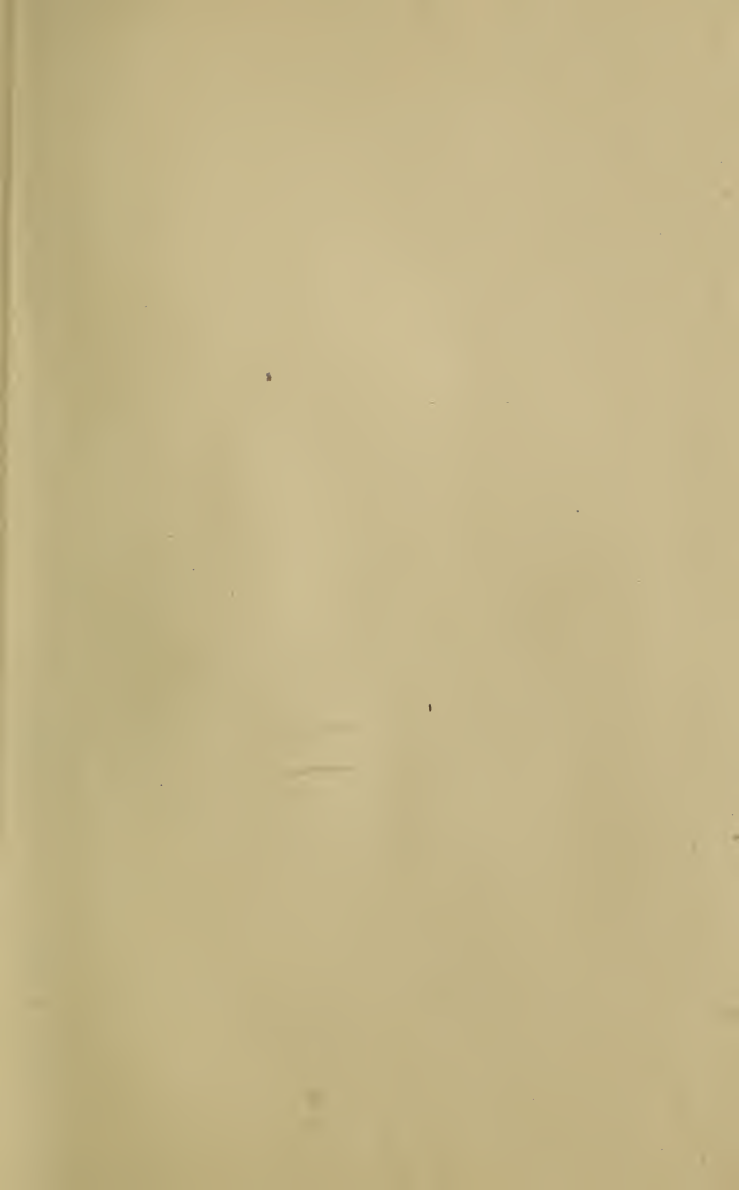
to be a person not worthy of trust, any persons voting for such a one, their votes should not be counted, and the expenses of trial should be paid by the town, city, county, state or nation, according to whatever the case was. If any person slanders one that was a regular nominee for any office, by any means either in language, circulating reports, printing slanderous pictures or circulating the same, if it can be proven on him by two or more competent witnesses, he shall suffer both fine and imprisonment, not less than one hundred dollars and not more than ten thousand, and be imprisoned not less than one year and not more than five years in the state prison. And in default of paying the money he shall stay in the prison at a reasonable rate until the whole fine is paid, according to the common rates allowed prisoners that work out their fines. And in trying these cases of abuse against public men, the testimony should not be re-

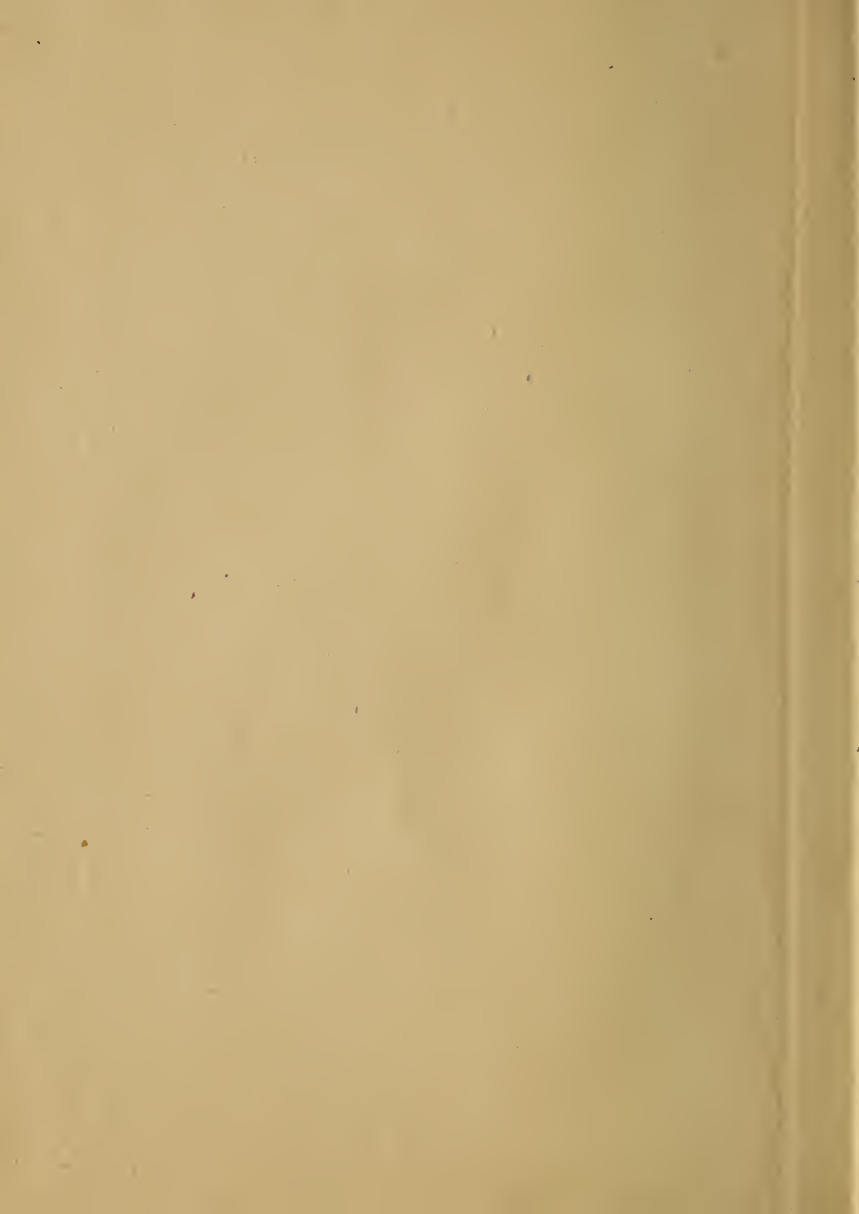
ceived as evidence, either for or against the accused, from any one that is not of unimpeachable standing.

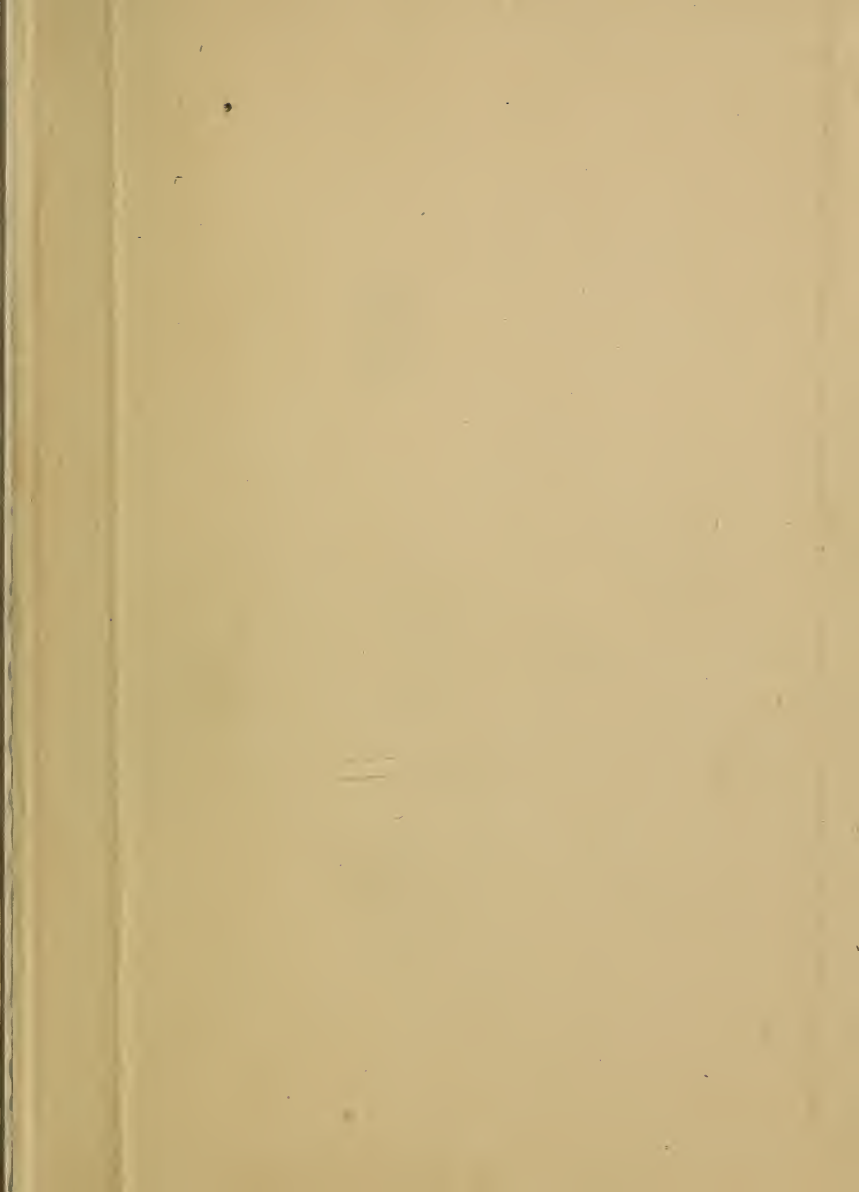




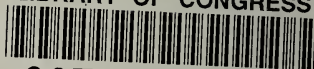








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